United Nations A/C.2/58/SR.9

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
31 January 2005

English
Original: French

Second Committee

Summary record of the 9th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 14 October 2003, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Ms. Cronenberg-Mossberg (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Sweden)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Ms. Cronenberg-Mossberg (Sweden), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 93: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (A/58/94-S/2003/642, A/58/131-S/2003/703)

(a) Women in development (A/58/135)

(b) Human resources development (A/58/348)

(c) International migration and development (A/58/98)

1. **Ms. Hannan** (Division for the Advancement of Women), presenting the Secretary-General's report entitled "The empowerment of women and integration of gender perspectives in the promotion of economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development" (A/58/135), said that the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations conferences and summits could contribute to the achievement of development goals and the global partnership for development established in the Millennium Declaration only if explicit attention was paid to the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality. Indeed, as the General Assembly had reaffirmed in its resolution 56/188, gender equality was of fundamental importance for achieving sustained economic growth.

2. Over the preceding decade, participants in the United Nations conferences and summits had highlighted the cross-cutting nature of gender perspectives and their relevance for sustainable development, more specifically, for promoting economic growth and eradicating poverty. While commitments had been made to women's empowerment and gender equality, those were not enough to guarantee their actual translation into developmental action.

3. Since the General Assembly's consideration of women in development in 2001, two major conferences had taken place: the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The findings from the research conducted had shown that economic policies that failed to take gender perspectives into account combined with the underrepresentation of women, could both exacerbate gender inequalities and hinder economic growth. Accordingly, the Monterrey Consensus had called for the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into development policies at all levels and in all sectors. While the initiatives being taken along those lines were critical, they did not remove the obstacles women still faced in securing access to resources and markets. In many parts of the world, addressing land reform from a gender perspective would be essential for women's economic independence. Similarly, gender perspectives would have to be built into international policies and programmes, including those on trade and official development assistance.

4. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation had highlighted the importance of gender equality as a basis for sustainable development and raised the importance of considering gender perspectives in relation to land, credit, technology, information, and service provision. At every level, therefore, all strategies and action plans needed to be gender-sensitive. The fact that women continued to lack access to land and productive resources in rural areas in many parts of the world remained an obstacle to sustainable development.

5. The Secretary-General's report (A/58/135) had also focused on the World Summit on the Information Society and the role that information and communications technologies could play in economic growth and development. Little work had been done within the United Nations system on the linkages between gender equality and such technologies. The agreed conclusions submitted by the Commission on the Status of Women had stressed the importance of such technologies to the economic, political and social empowerment of women. Care would have to be taken to ensure that the final document of the Summit fully addressed the issue of women's access to information and communications technologies.

6. In the same report, the Secretary-General had considered the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the implementation of global commitments at the national level, through the use of planning and reporting instruments that sometimes failed to take gender perspectives into account and often limited them to certain sectors. Added to that, the lack of gender-disaggregated data remained a common constraint to all the instruments, as was the limited involvement of women in the consultation process.

7. She hoped that the work of the Second Committee would provide the opportunity for broadening and strengthening the focus on gender perspectives in the pursuit of economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The Committee would have to recommend the incorporation of gender perspectives into the first comprehensive review of the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration and the Second High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development.

8. **Ms. Heyzer** (United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)) said that the note of the Secretary-General on UNIFEM (A/58/168) documented both the difficulties that UNIFEM faced in doing its work and its track record with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment — two factors essential to the achievement of the development goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration.

9. In her view, UNIFEM must make its way through the mix of opportunities and threats and guide its work using the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Both documents created for UNIFEM an ambitious road map and set of commitments that required monitoring and implementation. Those commitments had been reaffirmed by the inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment as Millennium Development Goals and by the recognition, in the Millennium Declaration, that gender equality was not only important as a goal in itself, but was also critical to the achievement of other goals.

10. UNIFEM, like other United Nations agencies, was working in the context of increasing insecurity and violence, both within and among nations, and the danger that that posed to the multilateral system the Fund was pledged to serve. Globalization continued to shift the prospects of millions — opening up opportunities for some while creating new insecurities for others, especially women. The spread of regional and national conflicts was giving rise to a growing number of refugees and displaced persons, most of whom were women and children. In addition, the challenges of gender-based violence and the increasing toll of HIV/AIDS on women demanded that stronger and more effective partnerships must be forged within and outside the United Nations system.

11. UNIFEM's effectiveness was directly related to its capacity to build and sustain various types of partnership with donor and programme countries. Coordination mechanisms such as the Common Country Assessment programme, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers had provided opportunities to strengthen those partnerships. Increasingly, then, UNIFEM was working with partners to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

12. UNIFEM's operations were conducted in three areas in which it supported advocacy for women's empowerment and provided a knowledge base that facilitated the mainstreaming of gender in the work of the United Nations system. Indeed, critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals was the availability of reliable and gender-specific data. For that reason, UNIFEM supported initiatives designed to improve the ways in which censuses reported the economic activity of women.

13. UNIFEM's action in strengthening the economic security and rights of women was also important to the extent that it helped the United Nations system to achieve the goal of eliminating extreme poverty and hunger. There was no way that widespread poverty would disappear as long as its root causes went unaddressed. It was also clear that feminized poverty was a central factor in the reproduction of poverty. To address that issue, UNIFEM was supporting efforts to incorporate gender perspectives into macroeconomic frameworks and to strengthen country capacity to manage globalization and economic transition from the perspective of poor women. UNIFEM was also working with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to promote international awareness of the gender dimensions of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. UNIFEM was collaborating on a project to address the burden on women of performing the unpaid work of caring for the ill and dying.

14. Convinced that no development objective could be achieved while violence continued to destroy nations and lives, UNIFEM was supporting the participation of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding. Beyond that, UNIFEM was promoting the access of women to leadership positions in public life.

15. Experience having shown that violence against women persisted in times of war and peace alike, UNIFEM was defending women's rights and was managing the inter-agency Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women established under General Assembly resolution 50/166. Both gender equality and women's empowerment required systemic change, which could only happen through the building of partnerships at all levels. The international community had to unite in the quest to end violence against women and to create an enabling environment for those two objectives to be achieved as an indispensable condition for sustainable and peaceful development.

16. **Mr. Khan** (Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination), introducing the Secretary-General's report on human resources development (A/58/348), recalled that, in 2002, the Economic and Social Council had devoted its high-level segment to human resources development. The ensuing ministerial statement remained relevant to the work of the current session.

17. Globalization was challenging the international community to take a fresh look at the development of human resources. Knowledge and education had become essential to compete in a world where new skills had become decisive and education and health were the key to economic growth and poverty eradication. In recent years, the United Nations system had focused on helping countries to incorporate fully human resources development into their macroeconomic policies and poverty reduction initiatives.

18. Human resources development strategy must aim to provide opportunities for all, especially women and the girl child. That was an important means of promoting economic growth and eradicating poverty. Gender equality considerations were essential to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of human resources development policies and programmes.

19. As had been affirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 56/189, which emphasized the important role of information and communications technologies and encouraged the adoption of policies and measures to narrow the increasing digital divide between developed and developing countries, such technologies had become a new tool for human resources development. Organizations of the United Nations system had contributed in many ways to help developing countries to seize digital opportunities to promote human development. The United Nations Information and Communications Technologies Task Force created in 2002 at the request of the Economic and Social Council had been harnessing such technologies for human resources development as a key priority. Through its Working Group on Human Resources Development and Capacity Building, the Task Force had worked closely with relevant United Nations agencies and other private and public sector partners to enhance stakeholders' use of technologies.

20. The Secretary-General's report highlighted the urgency of increasing investment in human resources development. Although recent international conferences and summits had given fresh impetus to increase official development assistance, the gap between needs and resource requirements for health and education remained very wide. The flow of development finance would need to be increased and a higher share allocated to human resources development.

21. In conclusion, the report pointed to strategies that would prepare people for a knowledge-based and skills-based society and develop capacities and opportunities for emerging generations and vulnerable groups with special needs. Concerted efforts needed to be made to increase investments in human development and to combine short-term humanitarian responses with long-term development measures, so that the human capacity lost to HIV/AIDS could be rebuilt.

22. **Mr. Chamie** (Population Division) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (A/58/98), which had been prepared pursuant to resolution 56/203, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on international migration and development, along with an update on the lessons learned and ongoing activities relating to international migration and development, and to solicit once again the views of Member States on the possibility of convening a United Nations conference on international migration and development. The report provided a summary of the views of Governments on the matter. Given the low level of response to the inquiry — only a quarter of Member States had replied — it had again not been

possible to take a decision on the issue. Of the 47 Governments that had responded, only 25 had favoured the convening of a United Nations conference on international migration and development, while the others had expressed reservations about the proposal by arguing that scarce resources would be better used for the implementation of existing agreements; existing mechanisms of the United Nations system should be used to address those issues; and bilateral or regional negotiations were more likely to succeed in that area. Those favouring such a conference had put considerable emphasis on the need to safeguard the rights of migrants. Many had stressed that such a conference should be technical and analytical and deal with all types of migrants. States had often mentioned that such a conference would result in the adoption of recommendations or principles. Governments that had expressed a view about its funding had suggested that the United Nations should finance it. Other sources of funding had also been mentioned, such as special contributions from donors. However, the majority of donor Governments had reservations about the holding of a conference.

23. The report also reviewed concrete ways and means of addressing international migration and development issues within and outside the United Nations system. There was currently no international mechanism to deal with the complex linkages between migration and development. Nevertheless, recognizing that the issue of migration was of key relevance to the global agenda, the international community had attempted to take a new look at how the United Nations might support efforts to address the issue.

24. In conclusion, four points should be emphasized. Firstly, the prospects for holding an international conference on international migration and development remained uncertain. Secondly, the expectation that the United Nations should address the global challenge in a comprehensive manner had grown markedly. Thirdly, the mobility of people crossing borders had increased in magnitude and complexity in recent years. International migration affected the lives of many peoples and countries, directly and indirectly. It was now considered a worldwide phenomenon, involving a growing number of States and, as a result, had increasingly significant demographic, economic, social and political consequences. Finally, it was very clear that, for the twenty-first century, international migration would remain a central concern for nations and the international community alike.

25. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that the inequalities between men and women were even more pronounced in the least developed countries (LDCs) than in other countries and that it was women who suffered most. The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 articulated policies and measures that those countries and their partners should adopt in seven critical areas and identified gender equality as one of the most important cross-cutting issues. The empowerment of women and gender equality were crucial for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and many LDCs had made noteworthy strides towards that end. Nevertheless, although most of them had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, national reports on its implementation indicated that there were still cases of discrimination against women, who were excluded from full participation in political, social and economic life and benefited less than men from economic and social development.

26. Gender-oriented programmes funded by many donors were aimed at empowering women in productive activities, improving their access to assets and increasing their role in decision-making. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), for example, had afforded rural women the opportunity to find employment in income-generating projects. The support of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to the Network of African Women Economists had increased women's access to information and communications technologies. Various workshops sponsored by the Division for the Advancement of Women in LDCs had been very useful in strengthening the capacity of women for leadership responsibilities. It was regrettable, however, that the poverty reduction strategy papers, the common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework did not focus on gender mainstreaming in a comprehensive manner. LDCs needed assistance particularly in the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data on the progress made in the implementation of the outcome documents of the

global summits and conferences of the 1990s. The Millennium Development Goals could not be met without greater involvement by women.

27. **Mr. Aboutahir** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that education, training and access to information and communications technologies were pivotal for the development of human resources and that the donor community must increase its cooperation in that area.

28. The involvement of women in development had always been hindered by many factors, particularly increased poverty among women, a phenomenon known as the "feminization of poverty". In that connection, the Beijing Platform for Action recognized that the empowerment of women was a critical factor in the eradication of poverty, a process that would involve the transformation of power relations between men and women.

29. The Group of 77 and China believed that a constructive and sincere dialogue among Members was more than ever necessary in order to better understand and control international migration flows, particularly the brain drain from South to North. Member States had not yet reached consensus on the holding of a conference on international migration and development. The United Nations should continue to seek the appropriate ways and means of addressing that complex issue.

30. **Mr. Serio** (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) and the associated countries Romania and Turkey, said with regard to the participation of women in development that overall improvement in gender equality was slow, particularly in the area of political empowerment. Despite various measures taken at all levels, there was an urgent need for Governments to redress the gender imbalances that persisted. The European Union urged States to take every necessary measure to put an end to violence of all kinds against women and to guarantee women not only equal access to economic resources and employment opportunities but also their participation in political life.

31. With regard to international migration and development, the number of migrants had more than doubled in recent decades. Although that phenomenon was largely the consequence of globalization, too often mobility was not the result of free choice. While recognizing the positive contribution that migrants made to their host countries and countries of origin, the European Union was determined to adopt a common policy on immigration and it was currently developing policies to combat illegal immigration and human trafficking. In that respect, it welcomed the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and, in particular, its two Protocols concerning women, children and migrants. In that context, the United Nations had a pivotal role to play in the collection of reliable data on international migration.

32. On the broad question of sustainable development, including international economic cooperation, the European Union was now focusing its attention on the follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Summit. In that context, considering the importance of simplifying the agenda of the Committee and reaffirming the importance of the dialogue on development, the European Union believed that it was no longer necessary to retain item 93 (d), entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, and implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade", in the agenda of the General Assembly.

33. **Ms. Jan** (Pakistan) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. With respect to the participation of women in development, her Government had taken a number of steps aimed at achieving the goals set out in the Beijing Declaration, including the establishment of a Federal Ministry for Women's Development and a National Commission on the Status of Women to review the Government's policies and programmes affecting women's development and to implement the National Plan of Action for Women. Furthermore, for the first time in the history of Pakistan, one third of all seats in local governments and provincial and national assemblies had been allocated to women. More than 40,000 women had thus been elected as councillors and more than 200 as members of the national or provincial assemblies.

34. Human resource development contributed to poverty eradication and long-term economic growth and its importance had been emphasized by all the important United Nations conferences and summits. Human resource development was the cornerstone of Pakistan's economic recovery policy, which focused on health, education and poverty alleviation. The Government paid special attention to the introduction of accountable and transparent institutions in support of the poor and laws that promoted decentralization and popular participation; the eradication of poverty in rural areas where 60 to 70 per cent of the population resided; the promotion of employment opportunities for educated and uneducated youth in urban areas; and targeted interventions in the education and health sectors. In addition, a human development fund had been established to mobilize resources. The failure to achieve a consensus on the holding of a United Nations conference on international migration should not prevent the Committee from considering the issue in other forums as it affected a number of countries — countries of origin, transit countries and host countries. Her delegation therefore expressed the hope that the General Assembly would soon initiate a process to formulate a response to the global problem.

35. **Mr. Stanislavov** (Russian Federation) said that the development of human resources was of primary importance for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In that respect, priority must be given to universal primary education and greater use of information and communication technologies, including benefiting fully from the possibilities that continuing and distance education afforded, in order to improve the quality of the labour force, achieve greater mobility, and ensure better adaptation to changes in the work environment. The question of providing opportunities for Russian-language education for Russians living abroad deserved attention. That issue had become particularly urgent following the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had left many Russians living abroad and must be adequately reflected in the international processes in the field of education.

36. With respect to international migration, experience showed that the pace of migration was too quick for most States to be able to regulate migration flows and to deal with their consequences. There was no universal solution to the problem, because each case was different and therefore required a specific solution. The Russian Federation supported the convening of a conference on international migration and development to define common strategies for dealing with a multifaceted problem. Such a conference would also be an opportunity to consider the root causes, trends and impact of migration on countries of origin, transit countries and host countries, as well as possible measures to regulate migration flows and counter illegal immigration. There was need for greater international cooperation in that area. The Programme of Action adopted at the 1996 Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States had laid the foundation for cooperation between States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, other interested countries, as well as non-governmental organizations on migration issues in the region.

37. **Ms. Pulido** (Venezuela) said that her country had instituted an economic recovery programme aimed at reducing poverty and improving living standards through its focus on social action that upheld the principles of social justice and people's participation. The Government had begun to democratize lending and had set up institutions which were facilitating people's access to credit, thereby promoting the participation of the poorest among them in the production economy. It was important to adopt policies and measures that would help to narrow the widening gap between developed and developing countries, especially the digital divide, and to reduce external debt in order to lighten the burden on poor countries. Converting their debt into human resource development programmes would also be welcome.

38. Venezuela felt the need to institute a fairer and more equitable international cooperation system that would use innovative ways of reversing pauperization and promoting development. The rise of extreme poverty called for a balanced and fair redistribution of resources. That was why Venezuela accorded particular importance to the South-South cooperation machinery which must be developed to boost the economic independence of developing countries and guarantee their equal and effective participation in the world economic order. South-South cooperation must complement North-South cooperation and be given additional financial resources. Venezuela was participating in regional cooperation and assistance

arrangements such as those conducted within the framework of the Caribbean Fund.

39. **Mr. Mahendran** (Sri Lanka) said that migration was central to development, given the major economic implications for developing countries in particular. Approximately 1 million of Sri Lanka's citizens lived abroad, and that had implications for the economies of their home and host countries. He welcomed the initiative taken by some States members of the European Union to set up a global commission on international migration as an independent body of eminent persons who would analyse international migration and make recommendations. Pending the achievement of consensus on the convening of an international conference on migration, the initiative remained a positive step.

40. **Mr. Gopinathan** (India) said that human resources development was critical to enhancing national productive capacity and economic growth. Therefore, strategies for human resources development should include special programmes aimed at promoting access to education and health care for all. Enhanced international cooperation, particularly development financing, was imperative if developing countries were to better harness their human potential. Levels of official development assistance still fell well below the 0.7 per cent of GDP target, and developing countries could advance only if developed countries met their commitments in terms of financial resources and capacity-building. Trade negotiations should also lead to effective measures for improving developing country access to goods and services markets, so that trade could become an engine for growth.

41. India attached particular importance to the issue of migration because Indians in the diaspora numbered about 20 million people who, by dint of their toil, contributed to the development of their home and host countries. Globalization had created a linkage between immigration on the one hand and trade capacity, competitiveness and employment policy on the other. Immigration policy now needed to be seen as going beyond social policy, because with global firms operating in an international context, immigration controls could act as non-tariff barriers. Developed countries should become more responsive to the requests for enhanced access to their markets. For countries like India, net gains in the negotiations would lie in the extent to which their service providers were enabled to operate in overseas markets either from remote locations or through the temporary movement of service personnel.

42. **Mr. Langmore** (Observer for the International Labour Organization (ILO)) referred to the vulnerability of international migrants, who faced risks of discrimination, exploitation and poverty. Migration should be conducted at a pace that enabled the migrants to be effectively included in the receiving society, which should not only be committed to multiculturalism, but should also offer the right of residence and citizenship or an equivalent status. Services such as orientation programmes, language training, access to housing and employment training were particularly helpful. The main ILO migration instruments were aimed at eliminating the discrimination in employment and living conditions to which migrants were exposed. The twofold objectives of the instruments were to regulate the migration process and to provide specific protection for a vulnerable category of workers. The other ILO instruments relating to discrimination, forced labour, minimum wages, the right to maternity leave and the like also applied to migrant workers. ILO considered the pursuit of a policy of equal treatment for all to be not only a way of protecting migrants, but also an incentive for fairness in ensuring that the cost of migrant labour became equal to that of national labour.

43. **Mr. Dall'Oglio** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that human mobility was a necessary and unavoidable aspect of the globalizing world. Migrants made an important contribution to their home and host countries, whether those countries were rich or poor. IOM had identified four ways of managing migration, namely: facilitated legal migration, especially labour migration; migration control to combat illegal migration; providing international protection in cases of forced migration; and managing the relationship between migration and development so that migration could contribute to sustainable development and development, in turn, could contribute to the management of migration. Traditionally, the focus had been on the negative effects of migration on development, but the idea, currently, was to recognize its positive effects. Migrants could rightly be considered potential agents of development, strengthening cooperation as they did between home and host countries and contributing to development by way of investments and remittances, which, for many developing countries, were the most

visible ways in which migrants helped their home countries. It had become necessary, therefore, to institute effective policies to promote the efficient transfer and effective use of remittances and to develop national and multilateral frameworks for migration management.

44. In the contemporary world, national prosperity depended, to a large degree, on the quality and participation of a country's human resources. As such, emigration had become a more significant issue in discussions on development. It was up to Governments to develop policies which would harness the potential of the diaspora to the benefit of home country development, and IOM stood prepared to contribute to that endeavour.

45. **Ms. Freudenschuss-Reichl** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that UNIDO had taken various initiatives focused on the economic integration of women in industrial development, specifically in the manufacturing sector. As the sole United Nations agency that dealt with industrial development and specifically with women in industry, UNIDO offered tailor-made projects to create opportunities for women entrepreneurs. The social and economic empowerment of women, who were in fact important agents of change, could bring about positive developments in the areas of education and health, including HIV/AIDS, and increases in productivity.

46. Women and girls constituted three-fifths of the world's poor. A large number of them were mainly engaged in subsistence agriculture and were often employed in small-scale enterprises that were rarely capable of internalizing functions such as logistics, technology acquisition and market intelligence. Also, women entrepreneurs often did not have the same access as men to productive resources and services, including sources of finance and opportunities to upgrade skills. Responding to those needs, UNIDO capacity-building programmes for women entrepreneurs combined the enhancement of managerial and technical skills on the basis of needs assessment carried out using participatory methods. UNIDO interventions involved treating entrepreneurship not only as a means of generating income but also of contributing to economic development and the social and financial empowerment of women. Its interventions were designed, through counselling, to identify bottlenecks and combine technical and business management training. They advanced sustainability concerns and institutional capacity-building, the formation of self-help groups and linking up with credit mechanisms.

47. The majority of UNIDO-sponsored women entrepreneurship programmes were being implemented in Africa, with an emphasis on the food sector, textiles and leather products. Activities had been carried out in Morocco, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam, and similar initiatives had been launched in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal and Uganda. Emphasis was put on small enterprises owned by women, who had a key role to play in economic growth and equitable development in developing countries. In order to enhance women's productive opportunities, and hence their position in industry and the economy, it was essential to provide them with equal access to know-how, technologies and credit, as well as options for fair trade. Training in artisanal or high-technology industries was therefore essential to enable women to advance to more rewarding positions.

48. **Ms. Zubčević** (Croatia) said that she was disappointed that there had not been a joint informal debate of the Second and Third Committees on the items under consideration. Gender equality was of fundamental importance for achieving economic growth and sustainable development, the ultimate challenge of globalization, as well as more equitable distribution of income in the world. Much remained to be done to reduce extreme poverty and achieve increased economic growth, but it had been proven that investing in women and girls yielded enhanced productivity, efficiency and growth.

49. Her Government was aware of the inequalities that remained between men and women in Croatia and therefore promoted equal opportunities for men and women to enjoy all human rights. At the international level, Croatia was trying to promote those same principles, including gender mainstreaming in all activities, through its participation in the United Nations system, in particular the Commission on the Status of Women and the Secretariat of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

50. A member of the Consultative Committee of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), her Government supported the work of UNIFEM and was grateful for its involvement in a pilot initiative aimed at strengthening the

implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Central and Eastern Europe. To that end, the Government of Croatia and UNIFEM had hosted a Regional Expert Group Meeting in Zagreb in May 2003.

51. International migration was an important factor in economic development. The number of international migrants in the world continued to increase and stood at 175 million. Transnational ethnic networks and diasporas promoted the transfer of knowledge and technology across borders, the strengthening of ties between migrants and their communities of origin, and greater participation of migrants in the development of those communities. Furthermore, migrant remittances continued to provide significant additional income for families and households left behind, often exceeding official development assistance.

52. Unfortunately, migration was often illegal, owing to the trafficking in persons. Croatia was viewed as a transit country rather than a country of destination. Because of the wars that had recently ravaged its territory, Croatia had also been faced with the problem of displaced persons and refugees, which had been compounded by the fact that the parts of Croatia to which most expatriates wished to return were those that had been devastated by the war. Economic revival and sustainable development were therefore among her Government's development priorities.

53. **Mr. Rojas** (Chile) said that international economic cooperation continued to be very inadequate, which was an obstacle to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. He deplored in particular the large number of rules and norms that applied to projects funded by international organizations, which were liable to prevent developing countries from pursuing their true development priorities. Financial assistance must be increased considerably, but there was also a need to direct private investment towards sustainable development. Without the active participation of the private sector, it would clearly not be possible to achieve the goals set out in Agenda 21 and sustainable development would remain elusive. Progress had been very slow in the area of the transfer of technology. The international community fully realized the need to establish a special fund for the transfer of technology, but, in that regard, there was still a huge gap between words and deeds. There were not enough incentives to ensure adequate levels of official assistance. Funds would be necessary, for example, for developing countries to create or partially finance their own environmentally safe production. Redundancy must be avoided and steady, measurable efforts to attain the goals set forth, for example, in the Millennium Declaration, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Monterrey Consensus would promote economic growth and development in developing countries, and cut poverty in half by 2015.

54. Like other delegations, he believed that the Second and Third Committees should be able to form an informal group to jointly consider issues that were of common interest to both Committees.

55. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana) said that his Government subscribed to the principle of the empowerment of women and that quotas for women had been established within the main institutions of Guyana. There were no legal obstacles in Guyana to the participation of women in public life. Women quite often did better than men.

56. With regard to immigration, the Guyanese diaspora abroad had grown larger over time, especially in North America, and it was estimated that 25 per cent of the Guyanese population lived outside the national territory. Guyana had no policies restricting emigration and that had resulted in a net decline in human resources and raised fears that the Guyanese population would decline if migration continued. There was a genuine brain drain and, in a way, Guyana was training people for export. That exodus of qualified persons was very costly. At the same time, there was a reverse flow into Guyana of persons who had a criminal past and who introduced upon their return new types of crime into the national territory.

57. Migration had a positive side, however, in the form of remittances from Guyanese abroad, which had helped to fund local investments. The delegation of Guyana wished to thank the United Nations for its study of the impact of the diaspora on the Caribbean region, in particular the diaspora of information technology specialists. The presence of Guyanese migrants abroad drew attention in their host countries to their country of origin, which could help them to maintain their ties to their mother country. The complexity of the situation could not be overemphasized, but the issue of migration was certainly one of international scope. A strictly regional approach to the problem would not be sufficient. The

Government of Guyana was also in favour of a global review of the problem. It did not matter whether or not the review took the form of the convening of an international conference on migration and development, but it would be necessary, in the event that such a conference were held, to study carefully and thoroughly the issues to be discussed. In any case, the United Nations should play a greater role in that area than it currently did. It might be possible to hold a special session of the General Assembly devoted to migration. The Secretariat, for its part, could play a more active role by undertaking the review. The Commission on Population and Development could also take up the matter.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.